

Members of the Congress, in this effort, we need your help. We need the help of the international community. Much of the budget you had allocated for Iraq's reconstruction ended up paying for security firms and foreign companies whose operating costs were vast. Instead, there needs to be a greater reliance on Iraqis and Iraqi companies, with foreign aid and assistance, to help us rebuild Iraq.

We are rebuilding Iraq on a new, solid foundation, that of liberty, hope and equality.

Iraq's democracy is young, but the will of its people is strong. It is because of this spirit and desire to be free that Iraq has taken the opportunity you gave us and we chose democracy.

We faced tyranny and oppression under the former regime and we now face a different kind of terror. We did not bow then and we will not bow now.

I will not allow Iraq to become a launch pad for al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. I will not deprive Iraqis of their hopes and dreams. I will not allow terrorists to dictate to us our future.

For decades, we struggled alone for our freedom. In 1991, when Iraqis tried to capitalize on the regime's momentary weakness and rose up, we were alone again.

The people of Iraq will not forget your continued support as we establish a secure, liberal democracy. Let 1991 never be repeated, for history will be most unforgiving.

The coming few days are difficult, and the challenges are considerable. Iraq and America both need each other to defeat the terror engulfing the free world. In partnership we will be triumphant, because we will never be slaves to terror, for God has made us free.

Trust that Iraq will be a grave for terrorism and terrorists. Trust that Iraq will be a graveyard for terrorism and terrorists, for the good of all humanity.

Thank you very much.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 11 o'clock and 36 minutes a.m., His Excellency Nouri Al-Maliki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet;

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 11 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess until 12:15 p.m.

□ 1215

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON) at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 9. An act to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5865. An act to amend section 1113 of the Social Security Act to temporarily increase funding for the program of temporary assistance for United States citizens returned from foreign countries, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now entertain up to 15 requests per side to address the House for 1 minute.

IRAQI PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSES CONGRESS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago, we welcomed His Excellency Nouri Al-Maliki to address the U.S. Congress. We commend him for his sacrifices and efforts to bring peace and democracy to Iraq. Once sentenced to death and thus forced into exile by Saddam Hussein's government, Al-Maliki has devoted his life to ending the tyranny that dominated his country for so long.

I commend His Excellency for his commitment to rebuilding his nation on the principles of freedom, democracy and the rule of law; and we look forward to collaborating with him in this regard. I applaud the Prime Min-

ister for condemning the countless terrorist acts in Iraq; and I encourage him to condemn all acts of terror in the Middle East, including the most recent ones we have seen begun by Hezbollah. As the Prime Minister articulated, we must continue to fight for "liberty over oppression" and "democracy over terrorism" wherever it may occur in the world.

GAS PRICES AND ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as gas prices hit another record high, I call on this Congress to pass visionary legislation for America's energy independence.

This summer, middle-class families are being squeezed like never before by the high price of gasoline and farmers are watching their profits erode. With the big oil companies pocketing record profits, the only action the Republican Congress has taken is more giveaways to Big Oil. We need a new direction in this country that will once and for all put us on the path to energy independence and free us from our reliance on foreign oil sources.

Rural America feels this crisis every day; and as cochairman of the Rural Working Group, I have worked with my colleagues to draft legislation to secure America's energy independence through the bounty of American agriculture. The answer to the energy crisis is growing on our farms, and H.R. 5372 will upgrade our infrastructure to tap these homegrown resources. Specifically, the Biofuel Act will facilitate the production of vehicles that can run on E-85, ethanol-based fuel and soybean diesel and provide tax credits to encourage gas station owners to update their equipment to handle these new environmentally friendly fuels.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a new direction for America; and Congress must take action now to secure America's energy future.

COMPETITION

(Mr. BONNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the value of competition in our Department of Defense acquisition process. Without competition, we have no choices, innovation does not exist, we have no bargaining position relative to costs, and the capability of our military stagnates.

Some would argue that we must protect our industrial base. I would suggest that competition does just that. We live in a global economy, and when U.S. industry does not produce competitive products, our entire industrial base suffers. If we are to continue to